Cultural Exchanges Through I.C.C.R.

*91. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what steps are proposed to be taken by Government to increase the calibre and quality of cultural exchanges and other programmes with foreign countries through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations; and

(b) details of steps and proposals in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) and (b) ICCR functions as an autonomous organization administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs. The calibre and quality of cultural exchanges and other programmes with foreign countries through ICCR are ensured by the decisions and directives of the authorities of ICCR, namely;

(i) the General Assembly,

(ii) the Governing Body,

(iii) the Finance Committee, and

(iv) any other Committee set up for discharging any of the functions of the Council as directed by the President of the Council, the General Assembly of the Governing Body.

Pending Applications for Passports

*92. SHRI S. MADHAVAN : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1669 given in the Rajya Sabha on 9th March, 1992 and state :

(a) what is the number of applications pending for issue of passports in each state; and

(b) whether Government propose to open a separate wing to dispose of the applications of N.R.Is., Indian permanently employed in foreign countries, business executives and students going for studies abroad ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) No, Sir.

Orientation Programmes for Ambassadors

*93. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA :
SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that about 25 Ambassadors were recently in Delhi for a twelve day orientation-cum-briefing programme;

(b) if so, whether Ambassadors/Heads of Missions posted in other countries will also be called for such briefing in batches;

(c) whether it is a regular feature to call Ambassadors enmasse to Delhi from abroad periodically;

(d) the total expenditure involved in respect of all Ambassadors etc. from all over the world on their TA/DA, boarding, lodging, local transport, entertainment etc. at the conference; and

(e) whether Government propose to send them a self-contained brief in future to save the expenditure on their TA/DA etc. ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Consultations with individual Heads of Missions and Posts as well as discussions with groups of our Ambassadors from specific regions are organised from time to time. However, it was for the first time that an orientation course on our new economic policies was organised by the Foreign Service Training Institute in New Delhi for 24 of our Heads of Missions and Posts in selected target countries on March 30-April 10, 1992.

(d) In view of the need to exercise economy on expenditure, all Heads of Missions and Posts who attended the orientation programme on March 30-April 10, 1992 were instructed to adjust the expenditure on this account within their Mission/Post's sanctioned budget grant. The details of the expenditure incurred are being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(e) Our Heads of Missions and Posts are being kept regularly briefed of changes and developments in our economic policies. However, it was felt that these needed to be supplemented by direct interaction between our Heads of Missions and Posts who are required to interpret and promote these policies to foreign audiences and those who are formulating and implementing these policies in the country.

Reaction of Government of India to Developments in Afghanistan

*94. SHRI KAPIL VERMA :

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the impact of recent happenings in Afghanistan on India's interests; and

(b) what is India's attitude in respect of these events and developments in that country ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : (a) No basic or long term impact on Indo-Afghan relations is envisaged. Our traditionally close relations with neighbouring Afghanistan transcend governmental changes that might take place in either country.

(b) While the events occasioned concern at the possibility of further violence and bloodshed and growth of ethnic tensions in Afghanistan, recent developments also raise the prospect of peace and restoration of normalcy in that country. Government wish the new Afghan authorities, whom we have acknowledged as the interim Government of Afghanistan, success in their tasks ahead and look forward to a continuous and fruitful dialogue with them for further strengthening of our bilateral relations.

Defaulting in Repayment of Loan by N.T.C.

*95. SHRIMATI MIRA DAS :

SHRI SARADA MOHANTY :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 1775 given in the Rajya Sabha on 9th March, 1992 and state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the N.T.C. has been a defaulter in regard to the repayment of loans and interests to the Government to the tune of more than Rs. 1,100 crores;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and whether repayment is now being made or further defaulting is going on;

(c) what is the budgetary support proposed to N.T.C. during the coming year and what was the same during the last three years;

(d) whether the number of perennially loss making N.T.C. units has gone up; and

(e) if so, what is the number and its percentage to the total number of units ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) : (a) NTC had to default in repayment of principal portion of the loan given to them.

(b) NTC Mills are continuously making losses on account of obsolete machinery, low productivity etc. and as such, there is no internal generation of resources for repayment of loans.

(c) For the year 1992-93, the budgetary support to NTC is of the order of Rs. 107.30 crores. The details of budgetary